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(647) the old tradition, but the temptation to intervene has repeatedly proved irresistible. Under the tradition of direct rule in British India, and with a greater veneration for the rule of law, British officials are less disposed to resist the temptation, so that, in British practice, indirect rule loses its virtue and vitality, and tends to become little better than a sham, differing from direct rule chiefly in the name. The Dutch who tried intervention for some twenty years during the Ethical period were finally disillusioned, and came to recognize that it was mistaken. There seems little reason to anticipate better success under British rule.

Yet the principle underlying indirect rule is valuable. A native authority whom the people accept as representing them personifies their common social will. He has great influence to recommend reforms in which he himself believes, and he remains permanently among the people to supervise their application until they have been adopted into customary social life. But he can do this only so long and so far as he is the prime mover and has the chief direction in affairs. A leading Dutch civilian has suggested that whereas, during the Ethical period and earlier, the European official was the 'elder brother' or overlord of the native official by his side, it has become necessary for the European to accept the position of 'younger brother', as adviser and assistant rather than a chief executive. On this plan the chief defect of colonial administration, lack of continuity, becomes a virtue. The native authority is permanent, but of necessity cannot be in immediate and continual close contact with the modern world, and a succession of European officials can put before him various new points of view and make suggestions among which he can choose those that are congenial and seem feasible. This process, however, works slowly, and requires that the native authority shall be at home in the western world. Some form of pressure or compulsion seems easier and quicker.

5. Compulsory Welfare

(656) It does not require an extensive acquaintance with contemporary colonial literature to note a growing tenderness towards compulsion as an instrument of welfare. There are demands for compulsory education, for the compulsory destruction of diseased crops and cattle, for campaigns against disease by operations, scientifically planned and humanely conducted, but military in spirit and thoroughness. For the common welfare men living in society must accept restrictions on individual freedom. In tropical society the people under their own rulers

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accepted such restrictions in the name of custom, but they welcome their removal. That was the strong point of British rule in former days; it brought, or seemed to bring, freedom. Now one finds suggestions of regret that compulsion is 'repugnant to the spirit of British administration', and that 'our traditions have not allowed us to contemplate the general use of regulation for the medical "cleaning-up" of disease-ridden areas'.[1] This tendency is often justified on the ground that we ourselves increasingly accept regulations that our more individualist fathers would have flouted, and that we must 'ask ourselves whether in dealing with the Dependencies, we are performing the function of a modern State'.[2] But the regulations in which we acquiesce, not without grumbling, proceed from ideas in which we share; although we recognize the need for penal sanctions to enforce them on a recalcitrant minority, public opinion is the most effective sanction. In tropical dependencies welfare measures proceed from the foreign Government and find no response among the great body of the people; on the contrary, they run counter to public opinion. We have already noted that in such circumstances the efficacy of compulsion is limited, but the relation between compulsion and welfare is so important that it deserves further examination.

In a city with a large European population it is possible to insist on modern hygienic precautions, at least within the European quarter. On western enterprises under European control the management can require their staff to accept western medical attention, and to comply with sanitary regulations; they can insist on these things as a condition of employment, and their hands are strengthened if they have the backing of the law. But in rural areas one may accept the estimate of Dr Hydrick, already cited, that compulsory measures are effective only where they have the support and the co-operation of at least nine-tenths of the people. No compulsion is required to encourage the people to attend secondary schools or to seek instruction of any type that improves their prospects or their status. People readily, too readily, submit to injections for the cure of venereal disease. But they do not, in general, believe in primary instruction or in western sanitation or western medicine. Their apathy is a subject of general complaint, but compulsion is no cure for apathy; rather it induces a reaction and transforms apathy into hostility. If the people do not accept innovations, the remedy is not compulsion but the demonstration

[1] Mills, p. 317; *Britain and her Dependencies*, p. 31.
[2] Hailey, Lord, quoted *Colonial Review*, 1942, p. 155.

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of their value by example and experience. Apathy betokens the failure of welfare measures, and the resort to compulsion is not only a sign but a confession of their failure. When measures that would really promote welfare fail, the explanation must be sought in some defect in the machinery of welfare, and as we have seen, this is defective because it works mechanically in response to the will of Government and not as an expression of organic social will. Compulsion can, within limits, be exercised effectively in the interest of economic progress, but to raise the standard of living among people in general it is necessary to organize a demand for welfare. Where an effective majority demands welfare measures, compulsion by penal regulations will give strength to their demand; beyond that, except so far as such measures are needed for the health of Europeans or the efficiency of western enterprise, attempts to promote welfare by compulsion almost certainly do more harm than good.

6. The Relation between Progress and Welfare

Indirect rule as we have noticed, although originally adopted for convenience, has been justified as a means of softening the impact of Europe on the tropics by leaving the people under their own rulers, laws and customs, and thereby moderating the pace of change so that they can adapt themselves to their new environment. Indirect rule does, in fact, provide machinery which should enhance welfare, and we may find cases where it has been effective. But the machinery often fails because the motive principle is unsound; it is applied to further progress rather than welfare. The growing tenderness towards legal compulsion under a penal correction is a tacit confession that, even under the stimulus of gentle pressure, adjustment fails to keep pace with the ever-increasing rate of change. Despite aspirations to moderate the rate of change in the interest of human welfare, there is constant pressure to hasten it for the sake of economic progress. 'A striking feature of most European economic enterprise in Africa has been the constant effort of Governments, companies and individuals to achieve specific developments in particular directions as rapidly as possible.'[1] That is true of modern colonial expansion in general. Governments are expected to bring new territories to a state of financial independence as soon as may be; the numerous departmental heads call for reports on this, that and the other sub-

[1] Frankel, p. 10.

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181 local custom and religious rule, had been present for centuries. But there
177 was little in the economic situation to sharpen it, and the Muslim leaders
565 themselves were often so steeped in the local ways that they allowed as the
602 religious law what was, in fact, the local custom. With the growth of
776 Western processes, the perception of new economic advantages tended to
779 change the equilibrium of the two principles. The advance of education
671 and heightened consciousness of Islam as a world faith also tended to make
182 the religious leaders themselves much more keenly aware of any divergence. Wealthy men who want to leave property to their sons, men with a strong religious sense, men who regard themselves as progressive, or who are in revolt against their clan leaders, therefore tend to be protagonists of the Muslim law. The conservatives, those who see in the custom a defence for women, those who see in it a symbol of an essentially Malay way of life, argue for the retention of the custom. Contact with the West, they say, is changing the structure of the peasant society enough already. The issue has also entered the modern political scene, since the search for factors to increase Malay integration tends to stress the national and extra-national character of Islam at the expense of the more local qualities of the *adat*. Here too it is growing Westernization which has sharpened the issue.

184 In a general discussion such as this, one may be allowed to refer to the
565 peasantry of South East Asia as a body. But they are not uniform in ethnic composition, in national interests, in language, in religion, or in general culture. Moreover, within any local community, there are competing, even conflicting, interests and opinions. The peasant may be unable to face up to the general issues which affect his life so deeply, but in so far as he understands his own interests he is very alive to them and capable of exercising keen judgement in them. It is the small scale of his organization for the most part which renders him so vulnerable.

000 What is likely to be the future of South East Asia from the peasant angle? Prediction is not worth much, since so many elements in the situation are imperfectly known, but there are a few which seem to be significant.

565 The peasant has no native middle class, of the same society as himself,
185 to give a lead to his development and stability in any wider economic
656 organizations that may be set up for his benefit. To improve his economic lot, and in particular to give him a larger fraction of his product through control of marketing, co-operative societies have often been proposed and sometimes tried. Their success has been only limited, partly because the peasant has not been fully persuaded of their attractions as against what the alien middleman can offer, and partly because of the difficulty of securing adequate technical supervision and administration at a sufficiently low official level. Much is now apt to be made of the colonial or semi-colonial status of the South East Asian peasant as a drag upon his development. There is no doubt that colonialism, as a specific form of political control of under-developed territories by a metropolitan Power, is

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nearing the end of its historical phase. How far it is likely to be replaced by a more insidious form of satellitism is not relevant here. But to talk about political emancipation of South East Asia being the prime requirement for the solution of the problems of the peasantry must not obscure the economic factors involved. Nor is fresh capital all that is needed. For the economy of the peasant to attain a relative stability a great development of technical and administrative skills in the commercial field is necessary. The building of a native professional class would seem to be an important element in the construction of a more integrated economic and political system. To concentrate attention on the political factors alone is to overlook the fact that most of the sinews of the economic organism are now provided by the one group which does not have overt political power—the Chinese.

What remains of the traditional class structure in South East Asian society is not of much avail as a defence of the peasant from alien exploitation. In any case, though the rulers and traditional nobility still command much respect, and provide symbols for the unity of the people, there are stirrings of resentment among the people against the perpetuation of a system in which these aristocrats do not perform recognizable services at commensurate incomes. But such resentment does not mean that the peasantry are dry tinder for the spark of Communism to set alight. Communism as yet does not seem to have any great attraction for the mass of the local peasantry of the South East Asian region. The lack of popular response to the Malayan insurrection has shown this. It is presumably true to say that the interest of the peasant can always be secured in any movement which promises to give him greater control of the land—more land more secure tenure, freedom from land debt, and better returns for his produce. But to most of the Indonesian peasants these aims are likely to be sought in nationalism, which can be largely given both an ethnic base and the religious sanctions of Islam. The person to whom the cry for a solution of the land problem is likely to make a most definite appeal, especially in Malaya, is not the Indonesian but the Chinese peasant, who sees himself as excluded from full participation in the land rights of the country folk. Over and over again one hears the cry, ill-founded as it is, that the Chinese have not been allowed to grow rice in Malaya.

Here may well come one of the acute pressure points in the South East Asian scene. The analysis might go as follows. Nationalism is a powerful political force because of its appeal to the individual in a projected, enlarged form of his desires and strivings. But by itself it is an aggressive rather than a constructive force. It lacks a coherent theory for the use of the resources at its control. An ideology containing such theory, and an equally ardent emotional charge on the part of many of its adherents, is provided by Communism. If Communism can work through nationalism it has a most powerful combination. Yet Communism in South East Asia lacks organization of any scale. The optimum conditions for its success are